The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

VOL. XXIV. BOSTON, NOVEMBER 21, 1874. NO. 30.

For the Myrtle.

My Birth-day Gift.

I CANNOT not tell you what it was
I found beside my plate
This birthday morn; I only say
My joy was very great.

At sight of something new and strange
Of silver gleaming fair—
It did not take me long to guess
Whose wee hand placed it there.

For one brown head was bending low
To hide a blushing face
At my surprise,—I knew it was
My darling little Grace.

"You saved your pennies all for this,
"You counted up the days,
"My little girl did not forget,"
I said, with words of praise.

And then I thought how more and more
Divinely sweet and true,
Through all these few and flying years
Loves bond between us grew.

If any sorrow touched my heart—
If missed some hoped-for good;
Fretted with work, or crossed with care,
She quickly understood,

And with that rare and silent skill,
A woman only knows,
Sought to supplant the painful thorn
By love's redeeming rose.

I have not told you what it was,
For in this gift I trace
Only my child's sweet thoughtfulness,
My darling little Grace!

IF ever God had failed one who trusted in Him, you might doubt; but He never has; therefore you should be confident.

THE children should be made to sing the truths of the New Testament, and in such a manner as that the influence would be lasting.

For the Myrtle.

The Lost Purse.

PART II.

THE boys were very happy when they were started on their ride.

The evening was delightful, and they were both ready for the enjoyment of it.

The horse trotted away with a willingness that showed how much he was enjoying, as well as his master.

"Is'n't this delightful?" said Sammy.

"Yes," Ed replied; "I would like to ride on and on forever, and never stop again."

"Why, Ed, what a foolish thing to say. Supposing you were taken at your word."

"Well, I shouldn't object."

"You know better Ed. Think what you are saying. How extravagant you are with words. Supposing you were taken at your word, and obliged to spend all the remainder of your life in this carriage."

Ed, laughing, said, "It would be a good long ride, wouldn't it?"

"I guess you'd find it so. You would have enough, I think, by that time, without adding eternity to your opportunity."

"Well, I don't know but that would be rather longer than I should care to ride. I wasn't thinking, when I spoke, just how much of a stretch forever was."

"You *ought* to think before you make such extravagant speeches. If you do not break your-

self of this habit, it will some time get you into serious difficulty."

"I snppose I must. But it is my nature to tell things full as large as they are."

"If it *is* your nature, it is a nature that ought to be controlled. What do you think would be the result if every wrong doer made this same excuse? Suppose the thief said, 'I couldn't help it. It is my nature to steal.' or the murderer, 'It is my nature to murder.' "

"If he did say so I shouldn't believe him. But you are the one that is speaking extravagantly now. There is some difference in my opinion between committing murder, and telling a story a little larger than it is."

"Of course there are degrees of wrong-doing, but it don't make one degree right, because there are other degrees beyond it."

Ed did not stop to reply to this, for at this moment his attention was drawn to something lying in the road just in the track of the horse's feet.

"What's that?" said he, drawing up the reins suddenly.

"What?" said Sammy, "I don't see any thing."

"You don't see it now because it is right under the horse's feet."

"But what did you see?"

"I don't know what it was. Something lying in the middle of the road that glittered in the light like metal."

"I guess some old lady has lost her snuff-box."

"I'll find out in a minute," said Ed, giving the reins into Sammy's hands, and jumping from the carriage.

As soon as he could run around in front of the horse, he cried out,—

"Oh Sammy, we are in luck this time!"

"What is it?" said Sammy.

"A purse. And it looks as if it had plenty of money in it."

"As Ed was saying this, he came back, and mounted into the carriage.

"We'll soon see what is in it," he said, as he dropped into his seat again beside Sammy, and took hold of it, as if he were about to open the clasp.

"Don't do that, Ed," said Sammy.

"Don't do that? Why not?"

"Because the purse is not ours, and we have no right to be meddling with the contents of it."

"Not ours?" said Ed, with a tone of surprise. "Whose is it, if it is not ours, I'd like to know. Didn't we find it in the highway?"

"Yes, we found it. But finding a thing does not make it ours."

"Whose then is it, pray? If you know anybody that it belongs to, more than to us, just let us know who the fortunate person is."

"I think it belongs to the man who dropped it."

"But that man is a long way from here, and the purse is in my hand. His hand is unloosed from it, and mine is closed round it. I don't see why it is not more mine than his now."

"No, Ed. It is much more his than yours."

"How do you make that out?"

"Your possession of it is mere accident, but the man who dropped it, no doubt earned all that it contains."

"But possession, they say, is nine points of the law."

"'*They* say,' doesn't make a thing true. A great many things are said which have no foundation of fact in them. I might snatch your handkerchief from you this moment, and hold it in my hands. Would that act make it nine times more mine than yours."

"Why no, of course not. But that, I think, is a very different case from this. I have not snatched this man's purse away from him. He dropped it himself, and walked quite away from it. I found it, and took it into my possession. That is a very different thing from snatching it out of his hands."

"Yes. But I insist that finding does not make the purse yours.

"But who has a better right to it than I have?"

"The owner of it has, of course, a better right."

"But I tell you the owner is not here, and I am."

"His not being here, does not make it that he is not somewhere. You have no right to the purse, or the contents of it, until you have tried all in your power to find out the true owner."

"How can I find him?"

"Well, one of the ways would be to advertise the purse."

"Don't open it," said Sammy; seeing that Ed was about to unfasten the clasp.

"Why not?"

"Because I tell you that it is not yours."

"Well, I need not steal what is inside it, because I unloose the clasp."

"Very true. I have no reason to think that you would steal what is inside. But I would rather you should not open the purse."

"But look here, Sammy, I may find the man's name on a card inside the purse, and then I should know who to return it to. I will not touch the money—not even to count it, if you wish."

"I do most certainly wish. And I would much rather that you should not open the purse at all."

"Why, don't you see that I may find the owner by opening it."

"It would be better to take it home to your father just as you found it, and let him open it, or do whatever with it he thinks best."

"Why, I know father would open it."

"Well, let him open it, if he thinks that the thing to do."

"I can't exactly see into your reasons. If you don't believe me a thief, why are you not as willing to have me open that purse as to have father open it?"

"Because your father, being so much older than we are, must know a great deal more about dealing with a case of this kind than we can know."

"I don't like to wait at all. I am curious to see what is inside the purse."

"That very curiosity is a reason why you ought not to open it. So do take my advice, and carry it home to your father. You'll see that he will say you did right in bringing it to him."

Ed reclosed the clasp very slowly, saying as he did so,—

"I don't like it. It seems so childish in a great boy such as I am, to carry a thing to his father instead of doing it himself."

"Why do you care if you do seem childish? There is no sin in being a child."

"No; not if you *are* one. But I believe there may be sin in acting like a child, when you are no longer one."

"Well, just to please me, if you are not pleased yourself, carry the purse home to your father."

"If I am going home to him with it, I'm going now, and we shall lose the remainder of our ride."

"I am willing. It is better that we should have a short ride, or no ride at all. and do right, rather than a long ride, and with it the remembrance of a wrong act."

While Sammy was speaking Ed had turned the horse round, and they trotted home in much shorter time than they had made over the same road in coming out. *Mrs. E. M. Bruce.*

First Ripe Strawberries.

A little girl once had a bed of strawberries. She was very anxious that they should ripen and be fit to eat. At last the time came.

"Now for a feast," said her brother to her one morning, as he picked some beautiful berries for her to eat.

"I can't eat these," she said; "for they are the first ripe fruit."

"Well," said her brother, "all the more reason for our making a feast; for they are so much the greater treat."

"Yes, but they are the *first ripe fruit.*"

"Well, what of that?"

"Why. you know the Bible says we must 'honor the Lord wtth all our first fruits.' And dear father says that he always gives the Lord the first out of all the money he gets, and that then he always feels happier in spending the rest; and so I wish to give the Lord the first of my strawberries too."

"Ah! But," said her brother, "how can you give strawberries to the Lord. And, even if you could, He wouldn't care for them."

"Oh, but I've found out a way. You remember how Jesus said, '*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me.*' So I mean to take them to Mrs. Perkin's dying child. She never gets strawberries, they're so poor."

Then away ran the children to give the strawberries to the dying child. And when they saw her put out her thin, white arms, and take the ripe, round juicy fruit in her little shrivelled fingers, and when they saw her eyes glisten, and her little faded lips smile, they felt as if they had a far richer treat than if they had kept the ripe fruit for themselves; and they were sure that the Lord had accepted their offering.

Dayspring.

One Deed of Good.

If I might do one deed of good,
  One little deed before I die,
Or think one noble thought, that should
  Hereafter not forgotten lie,
I would not murmur, though I must
Be lost in death's unnumbered dust.

The filmy wing that wafts the seed
  Upon the careless wind to earth,
Of its short life has only need
  To find the germ fit place for birth;
For one swift moment of delight
It whirls, then withers out of sight.

F. W. Bourdillon.

For the Myrtle.

The Deer.

BEAUTIFUL deer with the vigilant eye,
Watching your loved ones at midnight and dawn,
Well may the mother in quietude lie,
Safely regarding the innocent fawn.

Keep to thy watchcare, Oh beautiful deer,
Tenderly loving the mother and child,
God, by the presence of angels is near,
Guarding from danger thy home in the wild.

For the Myrtle.

A Prisoner Freeing a Prisoner.

THE name of the poor man who is crouching behind this tree is Hassan. He was made a galley slave many years ago. He was not a bad man, and after his masters found this out. they began to trust him sometimes to go on shore without his chains, and without a keeper to watch him.

On one of these excursions, Hassan saw some birds for sale in cages. He had a little money with him that he had earned by extra service, and as soon as he saw the birds, the thought came to him, I will buy one of these birds, and set it free. I know the poor little thing doesn't like being a prisoner better than I do.

It was a beautiful thought, and the poor slave must have remembered with joy his making it into a deed, long, long after the deed was done.

For the Myrtle.

More about the "Gudeman O' Balleng'eich.

ONE day the King dressed as the "Gudeman" went out on a visit to a little hamlet a few miles away, called Markinch. It was past noon when he reached there, and being hungry and tired he went into a little inn to procure some refreshment.

"I don't make a practice o' feeding gabuburgies like you," said the matter-of-fact hostess. "Besides the *ben-house* [meaning traveller's room] is occupied by twa big birkies—the priest and the schoolmaster; but may be they'll let ye sit wi' 'em."

She was quite right in her surmise. The priest and the schoolmaster were glad of the chance of seeing a new face. Even that of a "gudeman" was better than nothing, and so the disguised King sat and ate, and, it the truth must be told, caroused with them all the afternoon. As it grew dark the merry comrades arose to leave; and when the reckoning came to be paid, the schoolmaster proposed to the priest to join him in paying the stranger's share.

"Faith no!" answered the priest; "let the birkie pay higgledy piggledy with us!"

So the disguised monarch paid his share, As they separated, he thanked the honest schoolmaster for his intended generosity, and added—

"Your pay as a schoolmaster is probably small, but I shall make your living higgledy piggledy with the priests. I am the King."

The good schoolmaster did not know which to be most overjoyed at, this good news, or the honor of having eaten with the King. The latter was as good as his word, and the poor schoolmaster henceforth enjoyed a very comfortable income.

You may depend, however, that the King did not forget the priest. He had taken a strong aversion to him, and sending for him one day said to him:

"I am told that you are very proud of your

learning. I am about to propose to you four questions, and if you cannot answer them within four days, you shall no longer retain the living of Markinch."

The priest, who was surely as learned as he was morally unworthy, thought he should have no difficnlty in answering any questions the King might ask him, and went home quite triumphant. But when the written questions arrived, he found them of a most puzzling character. Utterly perplexed, he went to seek counsel of a miller belonging to his parish, called the Miller of the Middle Mill. He had no learning, but was known to possess a wonderful sagacity, which is sometimes better than learning.

The priest and the miller put their heads together, and the consultation ended in the miller's offering to personate the priest at the palace, and bring him out of his difficulty. The impersonation was not difficult, as the miller resembled the priest in form and feature, being both portly and ruddy, and when the appointed day arrived the miller set off in high spirits to execute his somewhat precarious mission, dressed in full priestly canonicals. With a solemn and pompous manner he presented himself before the King, and declared himself ready to answer the royal queries.

"Where is the middle of the earth?" was the first question.

"Just here," answered the disguised Miller, striking the ground with his cane. "If your majesty will measure all round you will find it is just at this spot."

"That may do," said the King, laughing; "but how long will it take to go round the world?"

"Twenty-four hours," said the miller, "if you rise with the sun and travel with him all the day."

"Not so bad," said the King, who was by this time getting quite into the spirit of the thing.

"Now can you tell me how much I am worth?"

"Just twenty-nine pieces of silver," said the miller. "Our Saviour was valued at thirty, and you cannot be worth any more."

"There's brave ingenuity in that," laughed the King, "and now for the last question. Ye'll find it harder to answer. What am I thinking?"

"Ye're thinking I am priest of Markinch; but I am only the Miller of Middle Mill."

This was too witty and shrewd not to delight the king, though it was against himself.

"You are a clever fellow," he said, "and ought to be the priest, if you are not. At any rate your answers have saved your friend."

This curious anecdote has served as the subject of a long, old-fashioned ballad. When I was a child I remember that a Scotch girl living at my grandfather's used to sing it to me. I cannot remember a single line of it now, except one, which always made an awful impression upon my mind,—

"For thirty pieces of silver our Saviour was sold."

This, however, I do remember, that the ballad was immensely spun out,—occupying half the evening in singing—but it was never half long enough for me. I would have gladly listened to a hundred verses. As my tastes have changed since then, I think half that number would serve me now. *C. M. S.*

Tears.

Is it rainy, little flower?
Be glad of rain.
To much sun would wither thee;
'Twill shine again.
The clouds are very black, 'tis true,
But just behind them shines the blue.

Art thou weary, tender heart?
Be glad of pain.
In sorrow sweetest things will grow,
As flowers in rain,
God watches, and thou wilt have sun
When clouds their perfect work have done.

The Way to the Poor-House.

A physician was walking along a road in the country, one day. He met an old man who had a large bottle of whiskey sticking out of his coat-pocket.

"Is this the way to the poor-house, sir?" the old man asked, pointing in the direction in which he was walking.

"No, sir," answered the physician; "but this is," laying his hand on the bottle of whiskey. That doctor was both witty and wise.

"PATRICK, my boy, what country is opposite to us on the globe?"

"Don't know, sir."

"That is," continued the teacher, "if I were to bore a hole through the earth, and you were to go in at this end, where would you come out?"

"Out of the hole, sir," replied Patrick, triumphantly.

THE man that would be truly rich must not increase his fortune; but retrench his desires.

Chant and Recitation for S. S. Concerts.

Chant.

When tossed on life's surges we tremblingly glide,
Where darkness and sunshine alternate abide,
Oh where may we find on our desolate way,
An anchorage safe from the storm? can you say?

Answer.

Oh yes! there's a refuge where we may abide
A power that protects us always at our side.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. In Him will I trust."

Chant.

In times of temptation and follies of youth,
Will He shield us from error and guard with His truth?
If seeking sincerely His favor each day
Will He list to our prayer and bless us alway?

Answer.

He doth the little ones freely to Him call,
And this blest promise giveth unto all.
"Those that seek me early shall find me."

Chant.

When in the race we run, striving for the goal,
Will He strength imparting, cheer our fainting soul?
Will He keep from fainting as we urge our way?
Guarding us forever lest our footsteps stray?

Answer.

Hear the blest assurance that to us has come,
He'll guard and protect us till the vict'ry's won.

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

Chant.

And when we no longer can labor below,
When our footsteps are tottering, and feeble, and slow,
When our strength has departed, our vision grown dim,
Can we then, looking upward, trust safely to Him?

Answer.

He guards us in childhood, and keeps us in youth,
Gives strength in life's conflict, then list to this truth.

"And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will deliver you."

Chant.

When breaks on our vision eternity's shore,
And time with its toilings for us is no more,
Oh will He be near us, protecting us still?
And teaching us lessons of His holy will?

Answer.

The past and the future to Him are the same,
Unchanging forever; let us hallow His name.

"For this God is our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even unto death."

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Chant.

Oh, then, let us praise Him with gladness and song,
And trust to His guiding us all our life long;
Through darkness and sunshine, He keeps us the same,
Then praise to Jehovah! glad praise to His name!

A. M, W. C.

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

—The members of the Sunday School connected with the Columbus Avenue Universalist church have presented the Rev. Henry I, Cushman, the retiring associate pastor, with a gold watch and chain. The infant class gave him a basket of flowers, and his Bible class a set of Smith's Bible Commentary.

—The Universalist Sunday School Union has elected the following officers: President, John D. W. Joy; Vice-Presidents, Henry D, Williams, A. J. Lovell, Charles J. Noyes; Secretary, E. F. Pember; Assistant Secretary, Franklin Williams; Corresponding Secretary, Benjamin B. Whittemore; Treasurer, Eben Alexander; Librarian, John S. Spooner; Board of Trustees for three years, W. H. Hollis, Hiram A. Bolles, W. P. Gannett, Albert Metcalf.

OHIO.

—We give the closing words of the report at the Ohio Sunday School Convention which met at Hamilton, Oct, 21st, and 22nd:

Forty-one of the ninety schools have reported, and from their reports I take the following statistics for the year just closed. asking you to bear in mind that the figures represent only a part of our numerical strength:

Officers and teachers, 561; scholars enrolled, 3,260; whole membership, 3,821; incresse in 18 schools, 326; number in Bible classes in 36 schools, 619; number added to the church, 75; report from 15 schools as belonging to both church and school, 568; amount of penny collections, $996.55; 14 schools hold weekly meetings, 25 schools do not hold them; 33 schools hold their sessions 12 months, 1 school holds its scssions 11 months, 1 school holds its sessions 10 months, 2 schools hold their sessions 7 months, 2 schools hold their sessions 6 months, 1 school holds its sessions 9 months; 29 schools are unreported.

The reports received show a marked increase in the average attendance, also a very gratifying increase in the number attached to Bible classes.

Last year 17 schools reported an increase of 500. Of these nearly 300 were two schools, Akron and Norwalk, leaving but 200 for the balance of the State. This year the increase in 18 schoole is 326—more generally distributed throughout the State; from which it is justly inferred that there is a steady increase in our schools generally, enough to relieve us of the thought that there is any backward movement in the State. Our growth numerically is slow but steady—while in efficiency there is ample evidence that we are taking rapid strides towards a high standard.

ILLINOIS.

—The seventh anniversary of the re-organization of our Sunday School in Peoria was appropriately observed Oct. 25th. The children gave recitations and songs, and Rev. J. M. Bailey addressed the large audience present, and a collection of $175 was taken up. The church was finely decorated with flowers and autumnal foliage.

JAPAN.

—The Sunday School works its way into Japan. One is established at Kobe, in that country, the first in which the Japanese language is used. There are about forty scholars, whose ages range from five to fifty years. As the Berean Lesson Papers have been issued in Hindostanee and Chinese, we suppose a Japanese edition will now be called for.

Doing for Jesus.

MARK xiv. 3—9.

Jesus was at a feast one day in the house of Simon. This man was called Simon the leper, not because he had leprosy at this time, but because he had at one time been leprous, before Christ came to him, and healed him.

This man had made a great feast to which he had invited many guests. Among them were Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, and his sisters Mary and Martha. You will all remember these sisters, for you have learned before how they each tried to serve Jesus. Martha was cooking, and trying to supply the physical wants of Jesus, when we found her before; at this feast we find her doing the same thing. She is serving the company—striving to have each one supplied with as much as, and what, was necessary for them to eat.

Mary did not care so much about their food. She was thinking of something else that she would do for Jesus which was more important than giving Him to eat.

When they were all sitting at the table, Mary took a beautiful flask of white stone, called alabaster, which was full of precious ointment. This ointment was spikenard, which smelled very sweet. It was an oil for which a great price had to be paid.

But Mary did not care for the expense of this anointing. She broke the neck off from the flask, and poured all of the oil upon Jesus' head.

You would not like to have as much oil as this poured upon your head at any one time, but Jesus liked it. They thought in those days that it was a very nice thing to pour this fragrant oil upon the head. When visitors came to their houses, this was one of the things they did, if they were persons whom they very much respected. They used to put oil upon dead people, and on the clothes in which the dead were wrapped. They put oil upon sick people to cure them, and upon priests, and prophets, and kings. If they had not thought it a very great honor they would not have used it in this way.

Mary knew nothing that she could do for her Lord that would show more how much she wished to honor Him. When she had poured the oil on His head, she felt very much pleased with what she had done. But there were some people standing by who were very angry with her for this. They began to say, "Why is this waste of the ointment allowed? It might have been sold for fifty dollars, and all this money could have been given to the poor."

They thought the money had been wasted. I dare say that they had themselves eaten cakes and a great many needless things at the feast, the money for which might have been given to the poor. But they did not consider this. They were like a great many people living now, who can see their neighbor's mistakes much easier than they can their own.

Do you think Jesus blamed Mary for putting this precious oil upon His head? I do not think that He did. For He knew that she had done this because she loved Him. It is right and beautiful to give presents—if we are able to do it—costly presents to those whom we love. This was what Mary had done for her dear Lord and Master, and no doubt she had money left to give to the poor.

It is certain that Jesus felt that there was no wrong in what she had done. He praised her for it. When the disciples complained of her He said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her." Ye have the poor with you always. You can go and give to them whenever you like. But me you have not always Mary has done this before my burial.

Jesus knew that the time was very near when He should be killed, and He felt that it was well for Mary to have poured the oil on His body at this time, as if she were preparing for His burial.

It was because Mary loved the Saviour that she did this. And the act seems very beautiful as an expression of her love. Jesus thought it so good an act, that He said it should not be forgotten as long as the Gospel was preached.

Would you not like to have done an act so good that it could not be forgotten? We can none of us do personal good deeds to Jesus now, for His body passed away from the earth long ago. But there is a way in which we may still do for Him. If you would like to know how, read the little story of the "Ripe Strawberries" on another page of this paper.

Enigma.

A pronoun used in formal address.
One anciently skilled in the art of writing.
A woman who brought spices to the Saviour's tomb.
A place where Jesus appeared to two disciples after His resurrection.
One who was translated.
A spirit fabled to inhabit the waters.
An odd fancy.
A kind of seasoning.
The "apostle of the Gentiles."
With the first letters of the answers form a verse of Scripture, and with the last the name of a patriarch.

Answer.

Nov. 7th.

The eye of deceit
Can best count-er-feit:
And so, I suppose,
Can best count her toes.

THE MYRTLE

IS PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY THE

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

37 Cornhill, Boston.

CHARLES CAVERLY, Jr. Agent.

TERMS—PAYMENT TO BE MADE IN ADVANCE.

Single copy, or less than ten, **75** cents per year.
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